CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. A method for conducting credit card transactions comprising:

generating a proxy number in a client user interface software to be used in place of a credit card number in a transaction;

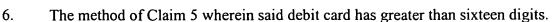
associating said proxy number with a financial account number;

generating a transaction number which comprises a BIN, a proxy number and a checksum digit; and

transmitting said transaction number to a merchant in place of an actual credit card number.

- 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said transaction number is in an identical format to a conventional credit card number.
- 3. The method of Claim 1 wherein said transaction number has sixteen digits.
- 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein said customer financial account is a credit card.
- 5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said customer financial account is a debit card.





- 7. The method of Claim 1 wherein said financial account is a master credit card account.
- 8. The method of Claim 7 further comprising the step of associating said master financial account with an individual customer account.
- 9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said individual customer account is a wireless account number.
- 10. A method for authorizing a proxy transaction number used in an electronic transaction comprising:

association network, wherein said authorization request includes a retrieval reference number;
associating said transaction number with said retrieval reference number;
generating an authorization reply in response to said authorization request;

transmitting said authorization reply to an address identified by said retrieval reference number.

11. A method of conducting an electronic transaction from a wireless device comprising:

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generating a proxy number;

generating a transaction number comprising said proxy number, wherein said transaction number has 16 digits

associating said transaction number with the customer account number of said wireless device; and

transmitting said transaction number to a merchant in place of a credit card number.

12. A method of generating a proxy transaction number comprising:

generating a proxy transaction number having from five to ten digits;

appending to said proxy number, prior to the first digit in said proxy number, a bank identification number having from four to ten digits; and

appending after the last digit of said proxy transaction number a checksum digit.

13. A method of cross referencing a proxy transaction number to a customer financial account comprising:

generating a proxy number having from five to ten digits;
creating a record in a cross reference database having first and second data fields;
inserting into said first data field said proxy transaction number; and
inserting into said second data field a customer's actual financial account number,

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wherein said first data field and said second data field have an unequal number of digits and are related for cross referencing.

14. A method for controlling the usage of a proxy transaction number comprising: generating a transaction number;

creating a record in a transaction number usage limitations database having at least one field for storing said proxy transaction numbers and having at least one date field for storing a transaction number usage limitation.

- 15. The method according to Claim 14 wherein said transaction number usage limitation is a single use.
- 16. The method of claim 14 wherein said transaction number usage limitation is a specific merchant identifier.
- 17. The method of Claim 14 wherein said transaction number usage limitation is a maximum purchase amount.
- 18. A method of authorizing a proxy transaction number comprising:
 receiving at a central server a request to authorize a transaction number;



retrieving from a transaction number usage limitation database a record containing at least one transaction number usage limitation which refers to said transaction number;

comparing said transaction number usage limitation to said authorization request; and determining whether said authorization request falls within the limitations contained in the transaction number usage limitation.

- 19. The method according to Claim 18 further comprising sending a negative authorization response to a merchant if said authorization request does not meet said transaction number usage limitation.
- 20. The method according to Claim 19 further comprising forwarding said authorization requests to an issuer's authorization system when the authorization request meets said transaction number usage limitation.
- 21. A method of substituting a transaction number to be used in place of a debit card number comprising:

generating a transaction number having a format identical to a conventional credit card number;

associating said transaction number with a customer debit account number and debit account PIN number;

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submitting said transaction number to a merchant in connection with the purchase of goods and services;

receiving from said merchant an authorization request for said proxy transaction number;

determining whether the amount of funds available in said customer debit card account exceed the purchase amount specified in said authorization request;

in the event where the funds available in said customer debit card account exceed said purchase amount specified in said authorization request, performing the following:

transferring from said customer debit card account to a transitory debit account an amount of money equal to said purchase amount specified in said authorization request.

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